FREE

TGA SPORTS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2018

GET OUT OF TIGHT SPOTS

MAKING POKE FAST

CNMI SOCCER MOMENTS

Q&A: RONALD VILLAFRIA

13 QUESTIONS FOR KENTO

TIPS TO PREVENT DROWNING

FROM 'THE TANK' TO 'THE FIRE TRUCK'

CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING A BETTER BODY

2018 SPORTS CALENDAR

JULY

NMI Soccer Training Center Opening: Northern Mariana Islands Football Association formally opens a state-of-the-art soccer facility, which features turfs and other amenities.

2018 Asia Pacific-Middle East Regional Tournament: The CNMI Major All-Stars will head to Korea to vie for a World Series slot, while the Junior and Senior League All-Stars are bound for the Philippines.

2018 Micronesian Games: The 130-plus strong CNMI delegation will head to Yap to compete in men's and women's basketball, baseball, athletics, ocean swim, men's indoor volleyball, spearfishing, table tennis, canoe racing, and weightlifting.

AUGUST

2018 Pacific Oceania Juniors Championships: The CNMI Junior Tennis Team will travel to Fiji for the annual competition and to defend its Nations Cup.

2018 Summer Fun Open Water Series: The fourth of a series of the Dolphin Club Saipan-hosted open water swims will take place from PauPau Beach to Tanapag, covering 3.5 kilometers.

SEPTEMBER

AFC U16 Women's Championship 2019 Qualifiers Round 1: The CNMI Girls U16 National Team will head to Tajikistan to play against the host nation, Thailand, Iran, and Singapore

2018 NMIFA Youth Fall League: The new season will unfold at the NMI Soccer Training Center with youth teams having the chance to play at the first artificial turf in the CNMI.

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Learn something new. . .

...IN THE KITCHEN

Mami Ikeda has a treat for everyone—a super easy way to make a delicious plate of *katsuo poke*. That's tuna *poke* for you. Uncomplicated, affordable, and yummy, it has the added value of all the ingredients being available on island and it doesn't leave a mess on the kitchen table. I should know—I tried my hand at making it. Also, it doesn't break the bank. In fact, the avocado was the priciest on its list of ingredients. Having grown up with an avocado tree in front of our house, I've gotten used to just picking the fruits from the tree once they were ready. But Mami's recipe is doubly blissful. Not only is it delicious, it is also very accessible. Master whipping up this treat and you'll be a dab hand in the kitchen in no time. ***See story on Page 4***

...IN THE GYM

Our human kinetics expert, Dre Delos Santos, reiterates a lesson he's been drumming into people's heads: There is no miraculous and fast way to a great body. Consistency is key. Focus on getting stronger; getting a bodacious physique is just incidental. In this edition of TAGA *Sports*, Dre outlines five sensible tips on how to get that beach-ready body. He cites scientifically proven ways, not the flash that fads typically promote. ***See story on Page 6***

...IN SOCCER

Roselyn Monroyo's piece on ***Page 14*** takes a trip down memory lane on CNMI milestones in the soccer pitch—just as the world celebrates the World Cup. As can be gleaned from Roselyn's story, the CNMI may be a soccer tyro but its ascent up the rungs of international soccer has been spectacular. No longer a perennial placeholder, it has managed to make a dent on the world stage and we can't wait to write and brag about their next exploits.

...IN JIU-JITSU

Our feature on Brazilian jiu-jitsu expert Clinton Dela Cruz is a great peek at the rarefied world of the martial art. As Clintons emphasizes here, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, or as aficionados call it, BJJ, is primarily a defensive art. Jon Perez's article on Dela Cruz on ***Page 22*** is a great introduction to the world of BJJ and clears the misconception that it is mainly a fighting technique for mixed martial arts.

...IN THE POOL

In the story "13 Questions" by Roselyn, we learn that Kento Akimaru is leaving the CNMI for Japan to go to university. Here, he shares 13 insights from his stint as a competitive swimmer for the Saipan Swim Club. We wish him all the best in this new phase of his life but he will surely leave a gaping hole in the CNMI's swimming scene. ***See story on Page 26***

WANT TO GET SOMETHING OFF YOUR CHEST?

You have a beef with something. Want to get it off your chest? For questions, criticisms, letters to the editor, and suggestions, email them to editor@saipantribune.com. Just don't yell 'coz I yell back.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA
Managing Editor

COVER ART

Brazilian jiu-jitsu expert Clinton Dela Cruz.

Photography by JON PEREZ

TAGA SPORTS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2018
VOLUME 7 NO. 32

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MARK A.RABAGO

Mark is writing about the two sports closest to his heart in this issue—basketball and running. Aside from the two sports, Mark is also an avid toy robot collector, having nearly 400 Transformers and Chogokin figures.

ROSELYN B.MONROYO

Roselyn did the story on CNMI soccer moments, inspired as she was by the teams considered underdogs in the 2018 World Cup. She hopes to one day watch the CNMI team's off-island game.

JONPEREZ

Holding sports and news writing seminars was one of Jon's tasks as a regional councilor for education of the College Editors Guild of the Philippines, a national association of student writers.

DREDELOS SANTOS

Dre is a personal trainer and strength coach in Honolulu, Hawaii. His favorite superheroes are Batman and Captain America.

MAMIIKEDA

Mami considers herself the daughter of the Koto Restaurant that was ran by her late parents in Susupe back in late '70s to early '80s. A member of disaster relief team C.O.R.E. and the Commonwealth Racing Federation and an advocate for the Commonwealth Cancer Association, Mami loves being a crazy cat mom and herb gardening. To reach her, email mami96950@gmail.com.

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Katsuo Avocado Poke

MAMIIKEDA
TAGA *Sports* Contributing Writer

By adding avocado to *katsuo*, you can make it taste like *ahi* poke!

MAMI IKEDA

Ahi Poke is definitely my No. 1 favorite *chesa*, but *ahi* can be pricy. What do I do if I can't afford to buy yellowfin? Replace it with *katsuo*! And by adding avocado, you can make it taste like *ahi* poke! So here's my recipe for 1-2 person, hope you enjoy!

- 1 block of fresh *katsuo* (tuna) fillet
- 1/2 avocado
- 1 bundle of green onions
- 1 tablespoon of dried *wakame* seaweed
- 1-2 garlic clove (grated)
- 2/3 tablespoon coarse sea salt (leave a pinch for garnishing)
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 - 1.5 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon roasted white sesame (leave a pinch for garnishing)

Soak dried *wakame* in water, leave for 10-15 minutes, then grab the *wakame* in your hand and squeeze out excess water.

Dice cut tuna and avocado and chop green onions.

Grate the garlic clove(s). We, Japanese, love to eat *katsuo* with either grated ginger or garlic. This time I used garlic to match my drink (wine!), but you can replace it with grated ginger. If you don't like either of these herbs, go for *pika* crushed red peppers.

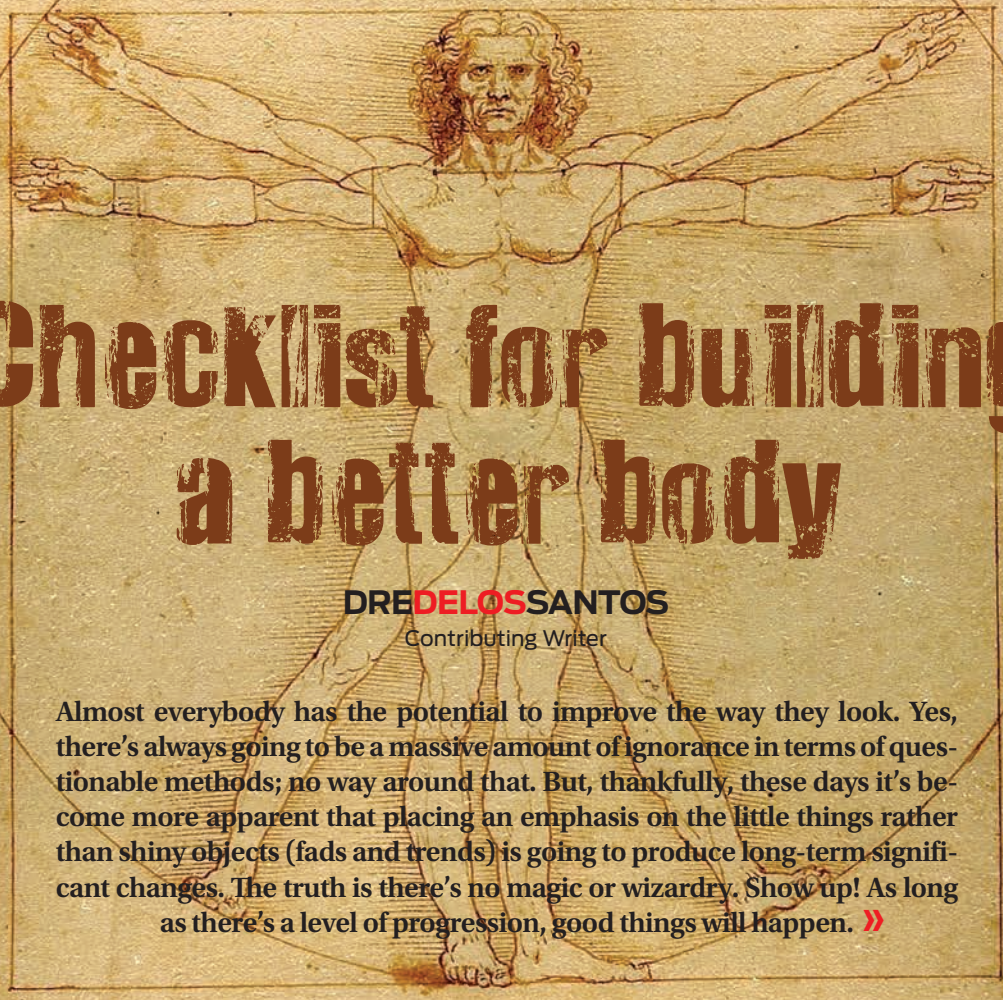
Mix all ingredients in the bowl.

Sprinkle a pinch of coarse sea salt and roasted sesame seeds before serving. Cheers!

WHERE TO GET

- **Katsuo fillet:** Afetna Supermarket (San Antonio), $3.50 to $5.50
- **Avocado (U.S. import):** Sky Market (San Antonio), $2.50 for two
- **Green onions:** Mine came from my garden, but any store that holds local produce.
- **Coarse sea salt:** Joeten Susupe, $1.98
- **Dried *wakame* seaweed:** Himawari
- **Roasted white sesame seeds:** Any Chinese store on island, $1.25

MAMI IKEDA



Checklist for building a better body

DREDELOSSANTOS
Contributing Writer

Almost everybody has the potential to improve the way they look. Yes, there's always going to be a massive amount of ignorance in terms of questionable methods; no way around that. But, thankfully, these days it's become more apparent that placing an emphasis on the little things rather than shiny objects (fads and trends) is going to produce long-term significant changes. The truth is there's no magic or wizardry. Show up! As long as there's a level of progression, good things will happen. »

CLICK-IT OR TICKET

Child Passenger Safety Week

September 23-29, 2018 (Child Passenger Safety Week)
September 29, 2018 (National Seat Check Saturday)

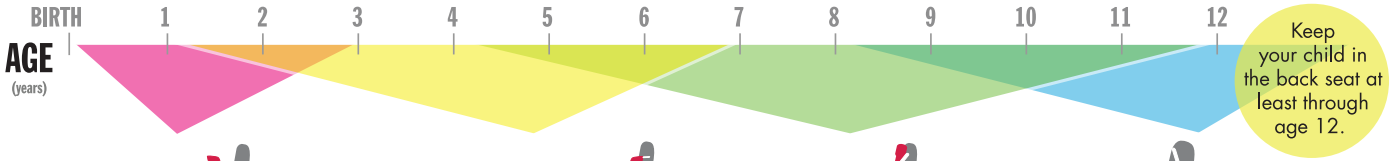
CLICK IT OR TICKET DAY & NIGHT

Secure their future.

Always seat them in correct car seat.

Car Seat Recommendations for Children

- Select a car seat based on your child's age and size, and choose a seat that fits in your vehicle and use it every time.
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or LATCH system; and check height and weight limits.
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements.
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.



REAR-FACING CAR SEAT

Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats: Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.

BOOSTER SEAT

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

SEATBELT

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember: your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

DESCRIPTION (RESTRAINT TYPE)

A **REAR-FACING CAR SEAT** is the best seat for your young child to use. It has a harness and in a crash, cradles and moves with your child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.

A **FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT** has a harness and tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash.

A **BOOSTER SEAT** positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body.

A **SEAT BELT** should lie across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest to restrain the child safely in a crash. It should not rest on the stomach area or across the neck.

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

SAMPLE 3-DAY ROUTINE

Full Body Workout
1 1) Squat Variation
2A) Standing Dumbbell Shoulder Press
2B) TRX Suspension Rows
3) Forward Sled Drag
4) Core Work

Full Body Workout 2
1) Deadlift Variation
2) Dumbbell Bench Press
3A) Push-Ups
3B) Lat Pulldowns
4) Assault AirBike Sprints

Workout 3: Circuit
A) Kettlebell Swings
B) Battle Ropes
C) Sled Push

1 BE PREPARED TO HIT A FEW WALLS

It's much easier to train when you're feeling high and mighty, but once the dust settles in, it's an uphill battle. So, be prepared to hit a few walls. A couple of months ago, I had a conversation with a woman who I regularly see at the gym. Long story short, she said she didn't feel like working out that day, and was on the verge of skipping it entirely. My go-to response: you can't get much done if you only work on the days you feel good. Dejection creeping in is perfectly normal. Once all gusto you had starts to fade, it becomes more pronounced.

For better or for worse, your inner dialogue is always going to be knocking on the door, prompting you to kick your feet up and relax. You're not going to get anywhere if you always let that get the best of you. Find a compromise. It's better to get in something than nothing at all. We want the process to be smooth sailing. However, don't fool yourself into thinking that the work should only be done when it's convenient.

2 CALORIES MATTER

Most people know this, but it bears repeating. If your diet comprises piss-poor food quality, there shouldn't be any confusion as to why you're not making progress. All the work you put in the gym is rendered ineffective. If you're one of those individuals who is banking on more exercise to make up for the incessant need to stuff yourself with pizza, donuts, and copious amounts of your favorite cocktail/alcoholic beverage, good luck.

That having been said, no matter how "clean" and wholesome your meals are, you can still experience a negative outcome if you don't know how much you're eating. Calories matter, folks. You have to be as equally, if not more, focused outside the gym. The ones who find success are usually the ones who are on point across the board, not just the training.

3 GET YOUR PROTEIN

Protein is the most important variable for building a better body. It's required to build muscle and optimize body composition. Forgive me for repeating myself, but it's virtually impossible to lean out with insufficient protein—and deficiencies in daily protein intake are clearly evident across the general population. Shoot for at least 1 gram of protein per pound of bodyweight. Make it a goal to have a palm-sized serving or two at every meal. Supplementing with a protein powder is effective as well.

4 WORKOUTS MUST BE CENTERED ON GETTING STRONG

Once you have the points above in check, you've already taken a big step forward. In fact, you've solved the primary reasons why most people have weight issues. Now when it comes to exercise, absolutely anything (sensible) will do. Just choose whatever program jibes well with you. Workouts that are centered on getting you strong would be the ideal route, though. It's the most reliable way to trigger sustained muscle growth.

5 SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

We've been deluded into thinking that we can transform our body rather quickly. We're either willfully ignorant or blissfully unaware that it takes months, and years of hard work.

It's one thing to adopt a discipline that pushes you to your limits, it's another thing to always train to complete failure. A lot of us have no problem being aggressive. The predicament is that we always think we're behind. As a result, we get carried away with doing more than what is needed.

Fact is, training to the point of exhaustion offers very little sustainability. Moreover, it's a lagging indicator for progress. You have the freedom to do whatever you want. Truth be told, I have no right to mandate what you can or can't do. Just be smart about your approach. Going berserker barrage every once awhile is fine, but you also need to ask yourself how is that going to affect the following workouts.

Take it one day at time. There's no rush. TS

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These achievements continue long after graduation as our AlumKnights have distinguished themselves as elected officials, doctors, attorneys, teachers, professors, and business executives. Our AlumKnights have also gained admission into prestigious universities like Georgetown University, Le Cordon Bleu Culinary School, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), New York University, Purdue University, the University of California at Berkley, the University of Notre Dame, the University of Michigan, the University of Washington, as well as military academies such as the Coast Guard Academy, the Naval Academy, and the US Military Academy at West Point.

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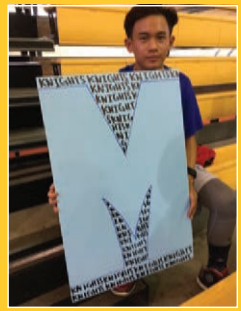

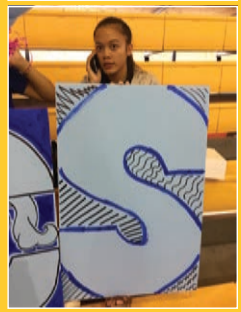

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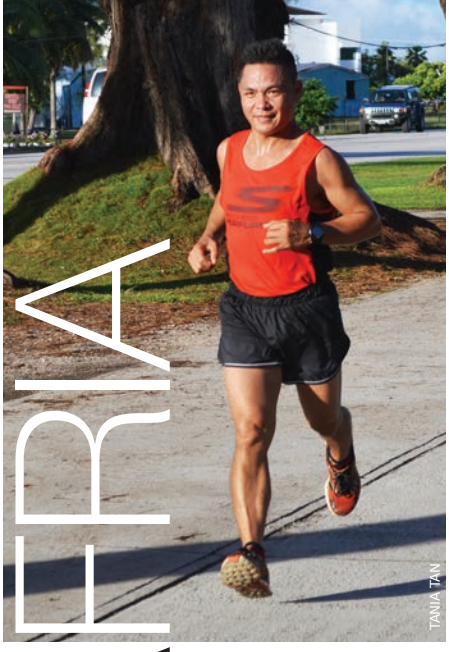

RONALD VILLAFRIA

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

Who would've thought cow herding on Tinian would lead to a lifelong love for long distance running?

That's exactly what happened to Ronald Villafria, who told TAGA *Sports* that he got his start in the sport when he went to Tinian way back in 1993.

"As part of my job, I ran all day, chasing cows in the field. From there I built my endurance and started competing in long distance events. In fact, I came in second place in my very first 10K race," he said.

Villafria, a former member of the CNMI national track and field team and one of the few from Saipan to have conquered the 36-kilometer Mt. Fuji Marathon, is this quarter's TAGA *Sports* Q&A honoree.

How did you get into running?

I started running when I was in second grade. I tried joining in 100m only and it continued until high school.

How do you motivate yourself to run?

My motivation is to maintain my body because we have family history of high blood pressure. By doing this I can stay physically and mentally fit.

What are your favorite running events on island?

The Saipan Marathon because there are plenty of off-island competitors. That makes it more challenging.

How often do you run in a week and how long?

I usually run four times a week for a minimum of 10K and maximum of 15K if there are no upcoming events. It really depends if there will be events where I need to run longer.

Do you prefer running in the morning or evening? Why?

Running in the morning is a lot easier than running in the afternoon. Your stomach is empty and that makes you run lighter compared to the afternoon where you already ate breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Aside from that, running in the morning can help you do your daily task without getting exhausted.

Do you eat before or after running and what's your pre-run and post-run meal meal/snack?

I prefer no meal before a run then I eat after, unless it's a big event like Tagaman or the Saipan Marathon that I need to run 42K so I have to eat two hours before the race. I usually eat a slice of bread and drink juice or any energy drink. Just to put something in my stomach. After the run I eat a small portion of rice and salad and few slices of meat.

How long is a short run for you? How long is a long run?

My short run is 8K and my long run is 21K.

How do you keep yourself hydrated during a run and do you stretch before and after a run and why?

Before running I hydrate my body with lots of water and during the run. If it's only 8K to 10K, then I don't need to drink. If I'm running 15K or more, then I need to bring water in my backpack. I do stretch sometimes, but mostly I walk a few meters before I run and do the same thing after to avoid having sore muscles.

What are your preferred running shoes and apparel and do you run with any gadgets?

I like using Sketchers shoes and apparel because it has great quality and very lightweight for running. I also use a Garmin watch whenever I run because I can check my performance after running, like total distance, speed/miles, total time, elevation, as well as my heart rate.

What's better: Running alone or with a running mate?

I prefer to have a running partner because you have someone to talk to during the run, but more importantly you can run faster and it's easier to do some running programs.

Why do you like running? What do you get from it?

I love running because it makes me physically and mentally fit and it makes me feel younger physically and age is just a number. I love meeting people here on the island and people from different places around the world.

Any tips for aspiring runners out there?

First is to have self-discipline by not abusing your body. Have a good rest and sleep. Second is to have self-confidence but not overconfidence, because you cannot do anything if you don't believe in yourself. Third is to be patient. All great athletes start from nobody to somebody. So just keep trying and work hard until you achieve your goal. Last, never ever give up!

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311 Calories

A primary egg-white omelet stuffed with a tasty vegetarian selection of red and green bell pepper, bean sprout, tomato strips, sliced mushroom and onions. Served with wheat toast.

BIBA Celebrate your health!

Grilled Mahi-Mahi Sandwich

Grilled mahi-mahi fillet on a whole wheat bun topped with salsa or Dijon mustard. Served with a side of green salad.

360 Calories

Grilled Chicken Sandwich
431 Calories

Grilled chicken on a whole wheat bun topped with a salsa or Dijon mustard. Served with a side of salad.

Shrimp Kelaguen

Shrimp sautéed in coconut milk, ginger, and hot pepper mixed with fresh grated coconut. Served with lettuce.

400 Calories

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Note: Please advice your server of any food allergies or ingredient concern. Thank you!

Protect yourself & your children from MUMPS & MEASLES.

Due to outbreaks of MUMPS and MEASLES occuring throughout the Pacific region, including Philippines, Hawaii and Federated States of Micronesia, all persons born after 1956 and travelling should get vaccinated with the MMR vaccine at least 28 days before departure. If 28 days before departure is missed then travelers should get the MMR vaccine as soon as possible. The MMR vaccine protects us from measles, mumps, and rubella and it can be administered at all Public Health Immunization clinics Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 4:30pm. Please call 670 236 8745 for more information.

Please note that people cannot get vaccinated today and be protected tomorrow. It does not work that way. Vaccines need time to build anti-bodies in our system in order to fight and kill diseases that enter our body so please do not wait for the last minute to get vaccinated.

Mumps most commonly causes fever and parotitis. Up to 25% of persons with mumps have few or no symptoms. Complications of mumps include orchitis (inflammation of the testicle) and oophoritis (inflammation of the ovary). Other complications of mumps include pancreatitis, deafness, aseptic meningitis, and encephalitis.

Measles can lead to serious complications and death, even with modern medical care. The 1989–1991 measles outbreak in the U.S. resulted in more than 55,000 cases and more than 100 deaths. In the United States, from 1987 to 2000, the most commonly reported complications associated with measles infection were pneumonia (6%), otitis media (7%), and diarrhea (8%). For every 1,000 reported measles cases in the United States, approximately one case of encephalitis and two to three deaths resulted. The risk for death from measles or its complications is greater for infants, young children, and adults than for older children and adolescents.

Contact the Immunization Program at the Division of Public Health:

Saipan: 236-8745 | Tinian: 433-9233 | Rota: 532-9457

Other Nos.: 236-8708/8780/8784

CDC
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

What is preventive care?

- Preventive care includes health services like screening exams, check-ups, and patient counseling
- Getting preventive care helps to lower your chances of getting very sick or developing infections
- Getting preventive care finds illness at an early stage when treatment is likely to work best.

Examples of preventive care services include:

TESTS
Blood Pressure
Diabetes Control

CANCER SCREENINGS
Mammograms and Colonoscopies

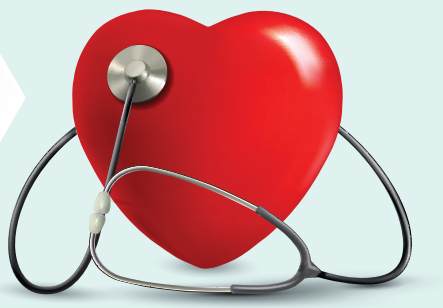
STD SCREENINGS
Sexually Transmittted Infections

REGULAR VISITS
Well-woman, well-baby and well-child

INTERVENTION
Quit smoking, lose weight, eat healthy, identify depression, reduce alcohol use, avoid sexually transmitted disease

CARE
For Healthy Pregnancies

VACCINATIONS
Flu, Pheumonia, Measles, Polio, Meningitis and Other Diseases



Getting recommended preventive services and making healthy lifestyle choices are key steps to good health and well-being.

For more information call: **Family Care Clinic:** 236-8309 **Children's Clinic:** 236-8374
Women's Care Clinic: 236-3521 **Immunization Program:** 236-8745

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CNMI SOCCER moments

ROSELYNMONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

From June 14 to July 15, World Cup players and teams from across the globe will try to create memories in Russia—something that will cement their glittering legacy in the sport adored by millions.

Though our national soccer teams have yet to perform on a stage as resplendent as the World Cup, the Commonwealth's squads have had their share of moments that gave us pride when we celebrated those milestones. Let's look back.

JULY 24, 2011

2011 East Asian Football Federation U15 Youth Tournament in Chinese-Taipei

The Kiyoshi Sekiguchi-coached CNMI Boys U15 National Team faced Macau for its last game in the tournament. The Teen Ayuyus dropped their first four matches in the EAFF-sanctioned contest, losing to Chinese-Taipei, 0-18; Hong Kong, 0-15; Korea, 0-22; and Guam, 0-3.

Before the competition with Chinese-Taipei, the Commonwealth bets met Macau four times since 2006 with the former Portuguese colony winning all of these games. Add to the equation the CNMI's winless record and zero goals in its first three appearances (2006, 2008, and 2010) in the EAFF youth tournament and you have a situation where saying our team was the underdog versus Macau is the world's biggest understatement.

Left photo: Jordan Butcher rushes into Jehn Joyner to celebrate the CNMI's victory over Macau in the 2011 East Asian Football Federation U15 Youth Tournament in Chinese-Taipei.
Right photo: Members and officials of the CNMI Boys U15 National Team are all smiles after beating Macau.

Macau scored first and flashes of their previous disappointing stints in an EAFF began to play in the Teen Ayuyus' mind. Then late in the first half, Jehn Joyner converted a header off a cross from Jireh Yobech to tie the match. Joyner's goal was a first for the CNMI, ending a five-year drought, as the islands started competing in an EAFF youth tournament in 2006.

The game ended in a deadlock at the break, but not for long as, three minutes into the second half, there was Joyner again making CNMI soccer history. His second goal (another header off a corner kick from Dakota Hall) gave the youth squad the lead and eventually the win—the first for the islands in international competition (Guam took 34 years to get its first international, while the CNMI did it in only six.).

"It was a complete joy. We played our hearts out for the islands and being rewarded for all that hard work we put in is an amazing feeling," the now California-based Joyner said when asked to recall that winning moment. »

Top photo: Kirk Schuler is mobbed by his teammates after scoring the winning goal in the CNMI's win over Macau in the 2015 EAFF East Asian Cup Preliminary Round 1 in Guam.
Middle photo: CNMI players celebrate after nosing out Macau, 2-1.
Bottom photo: The CNMI Men's National Team players pay respects to the Commonwealth flag before battling Guam.

JULY 23, 2014

2015 EAFF East Asian Cup Preliminary Round 1 in Guam

Sekiguchi was still in charge and the CNMI (men's national team) was incidentally pitted against Macau for the first of a series of qualifiers for the 2015 EAFF East Asian Cup.

Again, Macau drew first blood, threatening to hand the Blue Ayuyus their second loss after bowing to Mongolia in the opener.

Then, after more than 30 minutes of persistence, trying to find a hole on Macau's defense, Nick Swaim hit the equalizer off a corner kick. It also took the CNMI a while to score the winning goal, which was courtesy of Kirk Schuler, with the defender nailing a diving header in the 65th minute.

The Blue Ayuyus managed to hang on to the shaky lead at the end of the 90-minute regulation, but had to wait for two more minutes (stoppage) to take the victory.

It was perhaps the longest two minutes in the players' lives, but worth it as pandemonium broke after the final whistle was blown, with Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan himself rushing to the team to hug its members for posting the historic win (first for the CNMI men's national squad in an international tournament).

JULY 24, 2014

2015 EAFF East Asian Cup Preliminary Round 1 in Guam

A day after the CNMI Men's National Team got its first international victory, the women's squad duplicated that feat.

And for the third time, the win was against Macau, 7-0. Macau was beaten black and blue, as the CNMI drew two goals from Emily Maxberry and once apiece from Gabrielle Race, Alexa Vergara, Jeraldine Castillo, Megan Silberberger, and Carrie Schuler.

The goal against Macau was Schuler's second. She handed the squad its first goal in an international tournament in 2009 during their game against Guam in the East Asian Football Federation Women's Football Championship 2010 Semifinals Competition.

"As soon as I hit the ball I knew it was on target. Then I watched as it sailed over Guam's wall, past the keeper and into the goal. I was ecstatic! Celebrating with the team after that goal was such a memorable time in my soccer career. I immediately picked up Emily, and Brenda and Katie jumped on as others ran over to celebrate. What an amazing feeling to be a part of history. I knew how much this goal meant for the CNMI women's team. Every match our team fought so hard. Scoring this goal felt like a boost to keep fighting," Schuler said.

Clockwise: The CNMI Women's National Team celebrates after Carrie Schuler scored a goal against Guam in their game in the 2015 East Asian Cup Preliminary Round 1 in Guam; Members of the CNMI Women's National Team pose for a photo before playing in the East Asian Football Federation Women's Football Championship 2010 Semifinals Competition in Taiwan; The CNMI men's and women's national teams exchange high-fives after the latter's win over Macau; Alexa Vergara, center, battles a Macau player for possession; CNMI players are jubilant after beating Macau.

»

APRIL 25, 2013

AFC U14 Championship 2014 Qualifiers in Beijing, China

CNMI players rejoice after edging Guam in the AFC U14 Championship 2014 Qualifiers in Beijing, China.

Every time the CNMI duels with rival Guam, the stakes seem to be much higher.

So just imagine how the Commonwealth was overcome with pride when the Teen Ayuyus defeated our southern neighbor for the first time—not just in an ordinary tournament, but in an Asian Football Confederation competition. The victory was also the CNMI's first in an AFC regular event (we've won in AFC festivals before 2013).

"In football, that was my greatest achievement. It was the greatest because not only was it good for an individual purpose, but also for the whole CNMI. It was the first win against Guam and I had the winning and only goal in the game. It made me feel that the CNMI national team is getting somewhere. It showed that we are competitive and that we do not just play to play, but play to win. It is always an honor to play for the CNMI national team and to score the winning goal made me feel amazing," said Sunjoon Tenorio about his dagger from a pass from Edwin Kim.

Top photo: CNMI and Guam national team players and officials gather for a group photo during the Inaugural Marianas Cup in 2007 at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.
Bottom photo: The CNMI's Michael Hall, left, beats a Guam player to the ball.

MARCH 25, 2007

Inaugural Marianas Cup, Saipan

A year after the Commonwealth's entry to the East Asian Football Confederation, the CNMI Men's National Team was allowed to participate in the 2008 East Asian Football Championship Preliminary Round via the Marianas Cup—a two-leg qualifier that had the CNMI battling Guam.

Marianas Cup kicked off on Saipan and was the first high-level tournament on island. Hundreds trooped to the Oleai Sports Complex Field to witness the CNMI's historic introduction to international football.

Guam won, but not after being threatened by Mark McDonald's brace that forced the

The CNMI's Mark McDonald, right, leaps for a header during their game against Guam in the Inaugural Marianas Cup in 2007 at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

standoff in the second half, 2-2. A goal from Zachary Pangelinan saved the day for Guam, which was bannered by players that had been to international competitions several times and reinforced by younger and faster strikers.

The CNMI team, on the other hand, was loaded with players in their 40s and who were lured from other regularly played sports on island to don the Commonwealth colors.

Then there were a couple of young guns, including Lucas Knecht, who as of this writing is still the youngest player (14 years old and two days) in the world to have played for a men's national team and appeared in an international tournament. Wesley Bogdan, who was 48 years old (and 234 days) during his stint with the national team, was the world's third oldest to have seen action in an international competition.

From 'The Tank' to 'The Fire Truck'

MARK RABAGO
TAGA *Sports* Associate Editor

Now that high-leaping forward Matthew Duenas is a firefighter, basketball aficionados have come to calling him "The Fire Truck."

His moniker used to be "The Tank," in homage to Philippine professional cager Noli Locsin, whose heft and acrobatic deftness in the basketball court the 5'10" and 205-lb Duenas shares.

"I guess they called me 'The Tank' because I also like to drive to the rim and draw fouls from my opponents and I'm not scared of contact," he told TAGA *Sports*.

The 27-year-old doesn't mind his new *nom de guerre* and, like "The Tank," defenders still get out of his way whenever he drives full throttle toward the basket.

"I like it ("The Tank") but ever since I became a firefighter some of my friends have been calling me "The Fire Truck" and the announcers have also followed suit," said Duenas.

Long before he was the "The Tank" or "The Fire Truck," Duenas was a bespectacled basketball prodigy who first showed promise in the Island-wide Village Youth Basketball League.

"I started playing ball when I was 7 years old. My whole family was into basketball so I learned from all of them," the 27-year-old son of Manny and Molly Ann Duenas said. "My mom and dad are the ones who really pushed me to play because they enjoyed watching the games and cheering for me. They rather see me playing ball than staying home and watching TV or playing video games."

Duenas said he's always been a bruising player and loves physical contact, adding that he's never afraid to challenge bigger and better basketball players.

"I like to play physical basketball and impose my strength close to the basket. I always try to play what the defense gives me and see where to go from there. I pattern my game from all the good players I play with. The only way to be good is to play against good players," he said. "I always try to anticipate my opponents' next move and potentially evade them. I also like to see their strengths and weaknesses and expose it on the court."

From village hoops, Duenas graduated to the Rotary youth basketball league and Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization where he played for the Saipan Southern High School Manta Rays. He also played in various men's leagues and the inter-company league of TanHoldings.

He said the championship series of the latter between his former team, Kanoa Resort, and multi-titled Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan back in 2016 still resonates as one of his most memorable.

"I wouldn't say the most memorable game because it was a championship series. I really can't forget that finals between Kanoa and Fiesta. I like how the fans reacted and took pride in the two teams and how loud the fans cheered after every play. It just made both teams very excited and play harder," he said.

Kanoa won the championship in two games.

Aside from continuing to play the sport he loves, Duenas also wants to pass to his sons—Leon Connor and Liam Matthew—his basketball knowledge.

"My other goal in basketball is to be a coach to my kids and teach them how to play at a young age so that maybe, one day, when they go to college, maybe they can play for a university in the future," said Duenas, who is married to Connie Borja Taitano.

His advice to upcoming hoopsters is short and sweet, "When you play ball, don't play hard, just play smart."

Matthew Duenas is with his wife, Connie Borja Taitano, and their two boys, Leon Connor and Liam Matthew, during his graduation from the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Using BJJ to get out of tight spots

Don't let Brazilian jiu-jitsu expert Clinton Dela Cruz's looks fool you.

Sure, he has the nice boy next door looks but don't mess with him. He could teach you a thing or two about Brazilian jiu-jitsu, more popularly known as BJJ.

Contrary to the notion that Brazilian jiu-jitsu is only for mixed martial arts fights inside the octagon, the combat sport popularized by the Gracie family of Brazil is actually a better technique, Dela Cruz said, of defending yourself against would-be attackers.

He put his skills to good use when he was in San Diego, California in April 2017. Thanks to his skill, he thwarted an attempt by several men to harm him and his friend.

"My friend asked one of the guys for directions, but one of the guys probably misinterpreted what my friend said," he said. "The guy told my friend to shut up and my friend was, 'Whoa, dude, we're just asking to get to this place. What do you mean shut up?' Then all of a sudden, the guy started swinging at my friend and a whole fight broke out."

"I was trying to stop it, trying to push my friend away, but [one of the guy's] friends came at me and tried to take me down. Naturally, I don't want to get beaten up and don't want to get knocked out, so I defended myself. Got one of the guys in a guillotine chokehold and choked him out."

Dela Cruz said he didn't hurt the guy but managed to subdue him. Being trained in Brazilian jiu-jitsu helped him get out of that potentially tight spot. "We were just asking for directions. We did not want to get into a fight, but because we're already in that kind of situation, I had to act quickly. I had to take care of myself and my friend. I don't know who those guys were and it's a good thing nothing bad also happened to them. It was just a chokehold."

His friend did receive a couple of blows "but he was still good. He also got up afterwards."

That's the concept this Docomo Pacific employee wants to aggressively promote about Brazilian jiu-jitsu: that one of the basic Brazilian jiu-jitsu skill taught to every MMA fighter is not reserved solely for inside the cage.

He attributed people's misconception to the fact that the Commonwealth does not have many BJJ gyms. "People tend to associate BJJ with MMA and fighting. But first and foremost, BJJ is for self-defense. For me, it is the most effective out there."

"The original creators, the Gracies, they want to take it and show to the world that this is the best way to defend yourself against all

»

JONPEREZ
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

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JON PEREZ

attackers. They [the Gracies] wanted to show that their system was the best. So, it wasn't necessarily to fight or to beat up people, but to show that, in self-defense situations, they can protect themselves,"

"[Jiu-jitsu] is basically ground fighting. It involves a lot of chokes and locks. How to get your foe on the ground, have them by submission, and how to defend yourself when you are on your back," said Dela Cruz, who learned jiu-jitsu from Aldo "Caveirinha" Januario—one of the first students that learned directly from Carlos Gracie Sr.

Dela Cruz was taking up a business degree at the University of Hawaii-Manoa when he was introduced to jiu-jitsu after attending a free class. He eventually got hooked and worked his way to a black belt from Caveirinha, and helped establish several gyms on the Big Island before finally returning to Saipan around August 2017.

Dela Cruz was working at a surf shop in Hawaii when he was introduced to jiu-jitsu. "It just so happened that, during that time, I was already thinking of a way on how to get back into shape. I had always been in shape when I was in high school. I did a lot of stuff like paddling and running."

He gained a lot of weight after high school and while studying in Hawaii. It was in 2009, while working at the surf shop, that somebody offered him one free session to learn jiu-jitsu and he didn't stop there. Caveirinha taught him the ropes of establishing a jiu-jitsu academy and being a business major at UH-Manoa also helped him learn the trade. "I really got into it. Not just the aspect of training but also how to run a gym and work with people. It was a good learning experience for me. I've met a lot of amazing people and that became the foundation of my career path. Those academies are still open today."

He then met Cuki Alvarez and Ken Tanzawa in September 2017 and the two invited him to the TrenchTech Gym. "I started to help them train where we have been pushing each other to get better. They have a good group of guys, along with the higher belts, that are just helping each other."

"I just help them with their training. Identify their strengths and weaknesses, and look at how to improve their skills. The guys have responded well and they are improving weekly. They are now different to when we started."

Dela Cruz thinks that 5 years old is the best age to introduce kids to jiu-jitsu. "It all depends on the kids' ability to follow instructions and they need to have a specific class, separate from the adult beginners. Plus, it is 10 times harder and you need to be patient with kids since they have a short attention span."

"But, at the end of the class, they always thank you and acknowledge you for what they learn. That's a nice thing to know. You need to pay more attention to kids and every week watch their progress. That's why if you are teaching kids classes, you need to have more than one instructor—one head instructor and some helpers," Dela Cruz added.

Jiu-jitsu, however, is not only for the physically fit or for young kids. Dela Cruz said it appeals to a broad spectrum of people. "I've seen guys who are 60 or 70 years old. No matter what your physical level is, there's going to be the right way of performing the techniques. There's always a different way for the techniques for each particular body type."

"Like an arm bar, there are a lot of ways of getting that arm bar locked in. My way will be different from yours, but there are always variations on these techniques. That's why, my advice is, if you're going into jiu-jitsu, to talk to your professor and learn. It would be wonderful if you have an instructor that can modify the techniques that fit your body type and age," said Dela Cruz.

"The art is always evolving, even the fundamental techniques that I learned. There are more effective ways of teaching it now. The techniques are always getting better and maybe that's one reason why it has become popular and more people are trying it," said Dela Cruz.

He has also won titles in different jiu-jitsu tournaments from the time when he had a white belt, but the titles slowly became scarce as he got injured a lot while moving up in rank. "When I got my brown belt, I had a series of unfortunate accidents. I got injured so many times before competitions. One time, I hurt both my knees while I also popped both my elbows. I tore both of my [MCS], I suffered a herniated disc in

Clinton Dela Cruz choke holds Vince "The Clinch" Masga to show one of the moves used in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu in one of their training sessions at the TrenchTech Gym in Garapan. JON PEREZ

my neck. I got hurt a lot, not debilitating, maybe because I just trained hard and accidents happen."

"Being a brown belt, you already learn new levels of techniques. So, most of the time, you could start attacking the legs of your opponents. We do leg submissions while training and we learn how to get out of it. Since it is already a different level, we also train differently. You have to switch gears and raise your game when it comes to the higher levels."

Dela Cruz said trying MMA also once crossed his mind. "But it never happened. My passion was with jiu-jitsu and not MMA. Jiu-jitsu is one of the basic skills that you have to learn when you get into MMA. It was at the back of my mind but I could not train completely because of my job."

That's why he admires Frank "The Crank" Camacho and what he has done in raising the level of MMA in the CNMI and Guam and, in the process, introduced the Marianas to the world. "I have a lot of respect for Frank and for everything that he has done in getting into the [Ultimate Fighting Championship]. I've been following his career ever since he started jiu-jitsu. He has a good trainer in professor [Steven] Roberto. Hopefully, I could get a chance to have a training session with him someday."

Tips to prevent drowning

LESLIE BARKER
The Dallas Morning News

PIXABAY | Statistically, 10 people drown in the U.S. every day. Experts say there are a few steps people can take to reduce the risk of drowning.

Ellis Raymond has spent almost half her 30 years involved in teaching swimming and water safety. It's her passion, her mission. But when parents ask—which they do all the time—at what level their kids can be considered safe in the water, her answer is always the same:

"Never."

"We never want to give parents a false sense of security," says Raymond, general manager and co-founder of Jim Montgomery Swim School in Dallas. "We give them tools to make them safer, because they're never safe. My dad"—Olympic gold medalist Jim Montgomery—"is one of the most elite swimmers in the world, but he almost drowned in Hawaii. There's a huge misconception that we're safe in the water, and we're not."

With swimming season well underway, we're certainly not going to avoid lakes and pools and the ocean. Nor are we going to make our kids sit out cannonball contests and games of Marco Polo. Instead, let's be proactive here and use the statistics—among them, that 10 people drown in the U.S. every day—to make sure we and those we love don't become one of them.

We asked Raymond and Jennifer Pewitt, associate vice president over aquatics for the Dallas YMCA, to share their tips about water safety, and what we need to know to reduce the risk of drowning.

A lifeguard doesn't mean you can let your guard down

"People think lifeguards are just sitting there," Raymond says. "Their job is not to watch your child; it's to scan the entire pool. You have a false sense of security." If you put a non-swimmer into the pool, the lifeguard is likely to focus on that person and miss something else.

Drowning can occur in mere inches of water

During her days as a lifeguard, Raymond pulled kids out of the 2-foot wading pool "all the time," she says. "It's shallow but it takes two seconds to fall on your face. A lot of times kids don't think to put their feet down and stand up. Even an adult could drown in this, to fall in a foot of water and freak out. There's a paralysis that can happen and they can't recover themselves."

Everyone needs to take swimming lessons

That might sound obvious, but it's important enough that it bears repeating and re-repeating.

"Formal swim classes can reduce drownings by 88 percent," Raymond says.

Pewitt offers this disturbing statistic: "By age 10, African-American boys drown at 10 times the rate of Anglo boys," she says. "It's about swimming lessons. Many live in an apartment community and are home alone in summer with access to a pool and no supervision."

YMCA Safety Around Water Apartment Swim Program, set to kick off for the ninth summer, taught 3,000 kids in the Dallas area to swim last summer. The program is free; check with your apartment management company to see if it's offered where you live.

Memorize this mantra: 'Back to the wall'

Most people who drown in a pool are within reaching distance of its wall, Raymond says. For that reason, "one of the biggest things we teach is 'back to the wall. 'We have them fall into the pool and grab the wall: 'Back to the wall, back to the wall, back to the wall.' We're trying to ingrain it if they were to fall into a pool." The swim school starts this in parent-child classes when babies are 6 months old and "have breath control," Raymond says. "Parents know the goals and we get to teach water safety to parents while they're there with the baby."

The Y offers such classes too, Pewitt says. "At age 3, we do swimming lessons without a parent. That's where the magic learning takes place. They're really kind of ready to be in a class without Mom. Cognitively and physically, they can learn to hold their breath, kick their feet, float on their back, swim to the wall and climb out."

Y classes, she says, stress "being able to be comfortable in the water and orienting yourself. 'Turn around, grab the wall, climb out.' We increase the distance so it's 'jump in, swim a little, turn around, climb out.' It doesn't matter if they're 2 or 32. Along the way, we teach them to kick, but we want them to first have survival skills."

Hold your breath

"In swimming lessons, the first thing we teach you isn't swimming," Pewitt says. "It's really about can you hold your breath? Even little bitty kids, we say we teach them to comfortably and happily go under water. If you fall in the pool, you have to be able to hold your breath. People don't drown because they can't swim. They drown because they can't get a breath."

Learn to roll over onto your back

Going from stomach to back "is an easy way to catch your breath," Pewitt says.

Practice

"Parents sometimes come in after three lessons and ask, 'Why isn't my kid in the next level?' "Raymond says. "You give a kid a guitar for 30 minutes every week, and in a year, they won't be proficient. Small steps; we're building on them each week. We want kids to love the bathtub, shower time, lake time. We try to help them love water everywhere they go."

At the same time, though:

Be cautious

"You have to teach your kids to have a healthy respect of the water," Pewitt says.

Invest in a life jacket. Water wings don't count

"I hate those," Raymond says. "They're really a toy. They're not an approved flotation device. If a parent has to put a kid in a life jacket, get one that's Coast Guard-approved."

Not, Pewitt says, "the kind that is blown up."

Both recommend a product called Puddle Jumper, which snaps in back and is approved by the Coast Guard.

And speaking of life jackets:

If you swim in brown water, wear a life jacket

This holds true no matter what your age, Pewitt says. Brown lake or creek water means even less visibility, which can increase the incidence of drowning.

"If parents are sending kids to a lake house or know they'll be in open water, always ask if there are supervising adults and whether they'll all be wearing life jackets," she says.

When people drown in open water, peer pressure is often the reason, she says.

Put your phone away

"We all live in a heads-down world right now, Raymond says. "Parents are updating social media on the side of the pool. They're thinking, 'I can look down for a second; I want to post a picture of my cute kid at the pool.' I encourage people to put the phone down when they're at the pool."

As parents, Pewitt says, "you don't feel successful unless you're doing more than one thing at a time. When you're around the pool, if you aren't physically focused on what your kids are doing, you miss the emergency and two, three, five minutes go by and there's irreversible damage.

"It only takes 20 seconds for a kid to be unconscious. There's a silent struggle below the surface and then the kid is on the bottom," she says. "If people are swimming around in the pool, you just don't see them."

At home, if you're bathing your child, don't leave the room—even if you think answering the door or your phone will only take a minute.

Drowning isn't loud and frantic, like in movies

Instead, Raymond says, "It's silent and happens in a second."

Unless you're trained, don't jump into the water to save someone

Swimming experts have a mantra: Reach, throw, don't go, call 911. That means reach out with your arm, a pool noodle or something else the person can grab without pulling you in.

If that doesn't work, throw a flotation device like a buoy. Finally, call 911.

Fence your home pool, even if your kids can swim

There are way too many stories of families who head indoors after swimming, then one kid slips back outside, goes into the pool and drowns.

"I tell people you have to have multiple layers of protection," Pewitt says. One might be a door alarm, which sounds when the back door opens. Another is a fence—not just a backyard fence, but a fence that just goes around the pool.

"They say a pool fence reduces the risk of drowning by 85 percent. It drastically, drastically improves the safety of the pool. We just bought our first house with a pool. All three of our kids swim competitively. They're great swimmers, but we put in a pool fence."

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

13 QUESTIONS

ROSELYNMONROYO
TAGA *Sports* Staff Writer

For the superstitious, 13 is an unlucky number, but not for Saipan Swim Club's Kento Akimaru.

"My 13 years with the club gave me an experience that not a lot of people can have. With the club, I did not only learn the skills to swim, but also reflect on why I am doing this sport," said Akimura, who will be leaving Saipan and the club this summer to study in a university in Japan.

With the CNMI age group record-holder bidding the island goodbye, for now, TAGA *Sports* asked him 13 questions to sum up his fruitful swim career here.

The first stroke you learned? Freestyle.

The two people you look up to in swimming? I don't really look up to one particular person. My goal every time is to beat myself.

Three memorable tournaments? That would be Hawaii BIS Age Group Swim Meet, Hawaii Keo Nakama Swim Meet, and Guam A Champs.

Four things you do before going to practice? Eat, study, sometimes sleep, and get ready.

Five things you do before swimming? Stretch, sometimes run, prepare mentally, write the workout, and do push and sit ups.

Six races you prefer? I like 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly, 1,500m freestyle, 50m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, and 50m butterfly.

Seven people you want to swim with in open water races? Jinnosuke Suzuki, Victoria Chentsova, Christian Villacrusis, David Boyer, Lennosuke Suzuki (his SSC teammates), and Noel Keane from Palau.

Eight marine creatures you've seen while doing ocean swim? Turtles, sting says, spotted eagle ray, shark, jellyfish, puffer fish, trigger fish, and sea cucumber.

Nine good swimmers from SSC? Jinnosuke Suzuki, Victoria Chentsova, Christian Villacrusis, David Boyer, Lennosuke Suzuki, Taiyo Akimaru, Jinju Thompson, Jakey Camacho, and Sophia Gauran.

Your 10 favorite places on Saipan: Banzai Cliff, Grotto, Lau Lau Beach, Obyan, Pau Pau Beach, PIC, East Bay, Mariana Resort, Capricciosa, and my home.

In a 50-meter pool, how many laps can you do in 11 minutes? 18 to 19 laps (950 meters).

How many meters/kilometers of ocean swim can you do it 12 minutes? 1 kilometer

Of your 13 years with SSC, which year stands out the most for you? Why? That would be the 2015-2016 season, when I drastically increased speed and was able to make faster times than the previous years. The 2015-2016 season gave me hope that I can go faster. TS

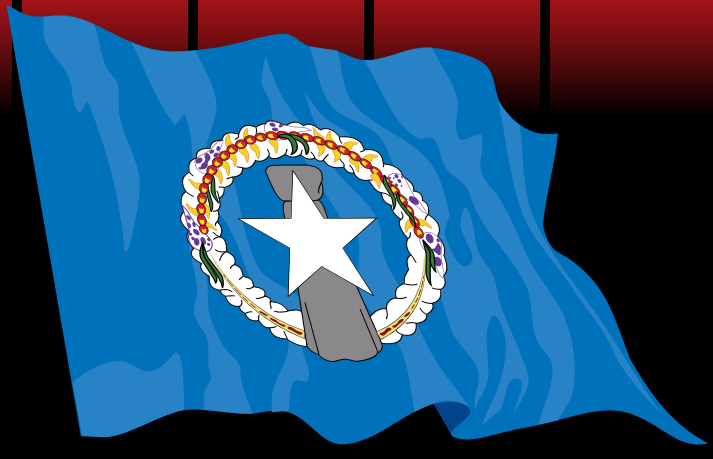
MICRO GAMES 2018

MORE THAN JUST GAMES

2018 MICRONESIAN GAMES YAP

JULY 15 - 27

- Baseball
- Men's and Women's Basketball
- Open Water Swim
- Men's and Women's Canoe
- Spearfishing
- Men's Indoor Volleyball
- Athletics
- Men's and Women's Weightlifting



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